



# Chameleon

Arts Ensemble  
of Boston

Transforming experiences in chamber music.

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2025

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### Chameleons essay trios of cinematic fantasy at Up Close recital on Sunday, April 27

**March 27, 2025 – Boston, MA** – Chameleon resumes its popular “Up Close” recital series with a program titled “A play of light and shadow” on **Sunday, April 27, 2025 at 4 PM** at Goethe-Institut, Boston. Clarinetist Kelli O’Connor, cellist Rafael Popper-Keizer, and pianist Vivian Chang-Freiheit will essay clarinet trios of cinematic fantasy including Beethoven’s Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11 “Gassenhauer;” Alexander Zemlinsky’s d minor Clarinet Trio, Op. 3; Libby Larsen’s *Trio Noir*; and Brahms’ Trio in a minor for clarinet, cello, and piano, Op. 114. *The New London Day* called Ms. O’Connor “the star of the evening,” *The New York Times* praised Mr. Popper-Keizer as “imaginative and eloquent,” and *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* noted that Ms. Chang-Freiheit was “soulful, passionate, playful, delicate, and her sense of ensemble brilliant.”



### ABOUT OUR UP CLOSE RECITAL SERIES

Our recital series gives audiences members the opportunity to see and hear Chameleon’s superb artists in an informal and “up close” way. *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* praised “the artfully chosen works,” hailed “the two stars treated us to a thrilling performance,” and noted “one felt charmed even before a sound was produced.” The series takes place at the Goethe-Institut Boston, transformed into an intimate cabaret setting with a complimentary glass of wine and refreshments. Artistic Director Deborah Boldin serves as host, sharing colorful commentary and her unique insight into each work.

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

**Libby Larsen’s** high-contrast, film noir-inspired mise-en-scène – *Trio Noir* for clarinet, cello, and piano – sets the stage for a darkly hued program of cinematic fantasy. The work had its premiere in

2023, and she intended it to function the way that a movie score interacts with our mind's eyes. Larsen writes: "I love film noir – its dark plots, femme fatales, detectives, chumps, bad guys and good, loyal women, low-key lighting, and the sadder-but-wiser protagonist's voice-over narration and the way it book-ends the story. Most of all I love the music – the way it creates unbearable tension, its sudden, hyper-dramatic bursts, its smoldering, sultry melodies. I hope *Trio Noir* is for you, a quantum experience – flashing you back from our world into your own 1940/50 cinematic fantasy."

Similarly, **Beethoven's Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11 "Gassenhauer"** gives us rising action and artful character development. An early work (1797) – for a rare instrumental combination at the time – the trio earned its nickname from the jaunty tune, frequently heard by night revelers, that serves as the basis for the theme and variations finale. In lesser hands, the trio might have been deemed "drawing room" music, but Beethoven elevates it for the concert hall with the virtuosity, warmth, and ingenuity we expect from the king of drama.

Shifting moods, dramatic tension, and brooding intensity are front and center in **Alexander Zemlinsky's d minor Clarinet Trio, Op. 3**. When Zemlinsky showed him the score in 1895, Brahms was so impressed that he immediately recommended it to his publisher, Simrock. The work is sometimes performed in a traditional piano trio configuration with violin instead of clarinet (created at Simrock's request) but the original is a vastly richer version in terms of color and weight. Although Brahms' influence is evident the musical language and the scoring, it is made singular by Zemlinsky's assured hand and grand, fin de siècle energy.

Finally, **Brahms**, with his richly detailed twilight masterpiece, takes us on a journey of soul and spirit from light to dark and back again. The **Trio in a minor for clarinet, cello, and piano, Op. 114** was composed in 1894 (along with his Clarinet Quintet and two Clarinet Sonatas) for clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, whose playing inspired Brahms to come out of his self-imposed retirement. In all four compositions, the lyrical and technical possibilities of the clarinet are exploited to the fullest. The Trio is perhaps the most delicate and compact, but no less magical due to Brahms' masterful craftsmanship, elegant form, and ability to illuminate the human spirit like no one else.

#### **ABOUT CHAMELEON ARTS ENSEMBLE OF BOSTON**

Founded in 1998, **Chameleon Arts Ensemble** has built a reputation as Boston's most adventurous chamber ensemble, integrating old and new repertoire into unexpected programs that are themselves works of art. Now entering our 27<sup>th</sup> season, Chameleon has performed more than 400 concerts covering a remarkable array of nearly 700 *different* works by 350 *different* composers brought together in smart, thematic programs that connect with our shared humanity and appeal to connoisseurs and newcomers alike. National honors include 2020, 2017 and 2015 awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, two awards from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress, and a pair of Adventurous Programming Awards from ASCAP and Chamber Music America.

**Kelli O'Connor** is principal clarinet of the Eastern Connecticut and Vermont Symphony Orchestras, co-principal of Vista Philharmonic, and regularly appears with orchestras along the eastern seaboard including the Portland Symphony, Rhode Island Philharmonic, New Haven Symphony, Boston Philharmonic, and Juno Chamber Orchestra. She was recently guest artist for the North Country Chamber Players and is a member of Radiance Woodwind Quintet.

Dubbed “a local hero” by *The Boston Globe*, **cellist Rafael Popper-Keizer** maintains a vibrant and diverse career as one of Boston’s most sought-after artists with a career routinely encompassing everything from continuo in 17th-century motets to solo recitals to avant-garde improvisation to indie rock. He is principal cellist of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project and the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as a member-artist of A Far Cry, Emmanuel Music, Winsor Music, Ibis Camerata, and Monadnock Music. His many appearances include the Fromm Chamber Players, Boston Musica Viva, the Boston Trio, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, and Walden Chamber Players.

**Pianist Vivian Chang-Frieheit** made her solo debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the age of 16. She has performed in Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall, the 92nd Street Y, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and in venues throughout the United States and Europe. Ms. Chang-Frieheit has also collaborated and toured with singers in performances presented by the Marilyn Horne Foundation. She is a frequent guest artist with the Formosa Chamber Music Society at Carnegie Hall and Artist Faculty and Piano Department Lead of Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard in Geneva, Switzerland.

## **CALENDAR LISTINGS**

### **Up Close 2: A play of light and shadow**

with Kelli O’Connor, clarinet; Rafael Popper-Keizer, cello and Vivian Chang-Frieheit, piano

**Program:** Ludwig van Beethoven, Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11 “Gassenhauer”  
Alexander Zemlinsky, Clarinet Trio in d minor, Op. 3  
Libby Larsen, *Trio Noir* (2022)  
Johannes Brahms, Trio in a minor for clarinet, cello & piano, Op. 114

**Date/Time:** Sunday, April 27, 2025, 4 PM

**Location:** Goethe-Institut, Boston, 170 Beacon Street

The closest subway stops are Arlington Street on the Green Line and Back Bay Station on the Orange Line. Goethe-Institut, Boston is wheelchair accessible.

### **TICKETS**

For tickets or more information, concertgoers can call **617-427-8200** or visit **[chameleonarts.org](http://chameleonarts.org)**. Individual tickets are \$52 with \$5 discounts for students and seniors.

**Telephone:** 617-427-8200

**Web:** [www.chameleonarts.org](http://www.chameleonarts.org)

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